UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.91/L.53
3 December 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SIXTH CONFERENCE

Report of South Africa

Paper submitted by South Africa**

---

* E/CONF.91/1.

** Prepared by Mr. Peter E. Raper and Lucie A. Moeller, Pretoria.

97-38082 (E) 060198

National geographical names authority

After the election in April 1994 of a government of national unity, the number of provinces was increased from four to nine, and the number of official languages from two to eleven. This will obviously have implications for geographical name standardization. The national names authority of South Africa, the National Place Names Committee (NPNC), held its regular meetings three times a year. In addition, two advisory committees were formed, one to revise the names of State water schemes, and one on the names of international airports. A working forum was appointed to make recommendations to enhance the South African National Place Names Committee in accordance with United Nations recommendations and international practice. The report of the working forum is currently under government scrutiny.

National gazetteer

In pursuance of resolution 35 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, a Concise Gazetteer of South Africa was prepared by Peter E. Raper and L. A. Moeller and published in 1994. The first volume of the national gazetteer of South Africa, that of the Western Cape Province, has been completed by the Directorate of Surveys and Mapping and is in press.

Toponymic training

Five United Nations training courses have been held in Pretoria, with participants from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Oman, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. Lecturers were from Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United States of America.

Toponymic Guidelines

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for South Africa (fourth edition) are being prepared by Dr. B. A. Meiring (University of South Africa).

Other publications

In pursuance of recommendations of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), relevant documents were compiled and edited under the title United Nations Documents on Geographical Names by the Chairman of UNGEGN, Peter E. Raper.

An article on UNGEGN was published in Names Studies: An International Handbook of Onomastics, vol. 1 (Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1995).

With a view to publicizing relevant United Nations resolutions and the work of UNGEGN, a report on the seventeenth session of UNGEGN was published in Nomina Africana, the journal of the Names Society of Southern Africa, as well as in the Ehrensperger Report of the American Names Society.

A report entitled "Criteria for proposed names changes", was compiled by L. A. Moeller. Specifically designed to encourage implementation of United

Nations resolutions, it was provided to the advisory committees of government departments, provincial legislatures, transitional local councils, municipalities and other authorities concerned with geographical names at national, regional and local levels.

The publication entitled Changing Place Names by E. R. Jenkins, P. E. Raper and L. A. Moeller (Durban, Indicator Press, 1996), also highlights United Nations resolutions and the work of UNGEGN.